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ART. XVII.—*Additional Notes upon the Zend Language.*

By JOHN ROMER, ESQ.

[Read 10th June, 1855.]

[I have lately had an opportunity of resuming the examination of the Zend question, and have put down the result to serve as a "Postscript" to my "Brief Notices,"¹ &c.—J. R., May, 1855.]

It is alleged that the invention of a language of so much character and grammatical peculiarity as the Zend is an impossibility, as may be proved by reference to the fictitious Formosan language, and that of the Ásmání Zabán of the Desátír. But the analogy does not hold. These pseudo tongues are the products of pure imagination; both unscrupulous inventions; the execution of the last, clumsy and open to instant detection. But the artificial construction of Zend out of Sanskrit materials (allowing for the deception of the act) proceeded on, and was effected in, a very different manner. A real language, with which the operators were well acquainted (see what Burnouf says of the mobed² Neriosingh), was to be taken in hand; the work was facilitated by using an alphabet—that of old Persian—corresponding, in its employment of distinct characters for the short vowels, with that of Sanskrit; the business was skilfully performed, and the knowledge of Sanskrit is so successfully applied, as to complete the fabrication of a language in which Sir William Jones, to his surprise, found six words of pure Sanskrit out of ten of the Zend text, with some of its inflexions formed by the rules of the "Vyākaran." Dr. Wilson observes that Zend shows an approach to Gujarátí idiom and Gujarátí corruption of Sanskrit, which awakened his suspicion. Nevertheless he thinks that none of the exiled and depressed Pársi priests in India could be supposed to have had the ability to invent that language, abounding as it does in analogies with other tongues, but overlooking the fact of Sanskrit being well known among them and used for translations (though the Sanskrit of these translations cannot be called classical) more than three hundred years ago.

¹ Journal of Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. v., p. 95, subsequently printed in a separate form.

² Burnouf is puzzled at finding a Pársi mobed called by the name of a Hindu divinity, and decides for its being Zend. He would have arrived at the right solution of his difficulty, had he known that the Pársis freely adopt Hindu proper names, mixing them incongruously with those of old Persian heroes and kings; e. g. Jamshedjí Manikjí, Rustamjí Ratanjí, &c.

This language with an approach to Gujarátí idiom and Gujarátí corruptions of Sanskrit, taking also Gujarátí words as Kennedy shows, is supposed to have existed from fabulous ages *elsewhere*, on what authority is not shown, and to have been brought to India by the exiled Pársís in the eighth or ninth century. But as the authenticity of these books of the Pársís, the sole depositories of the language called Zend, has never been proved, they cannot be received as evidence of the genuineness of that language; and hence, Sir William Jones, referring to the written specimens of it shown to him by the Pársí Bahman, formed his opinion that the Zend is a late invention of their priests, subsequent at least to the Musulman invasion; the work of exiles long separated from their native land, and the original seats of their overthrown religion.

Is there any record of a people who in any place and at any time spoke Zend? Is there any historical authority for the fact, or does it rest on conjecture only, that a people speaking the language of the Zendavesta were settled in India at some remote period between the time of the Buddhist reformation and the age of the Vedas, whence they emigrated to Persia, and thence re-emigrated to India? Leaving these questions to those who may be able to answer them, let us turn to the Pehleví in its connexion with the Zend. This language, found written interlinear with the Zend, Mulla Fíroz in his day, and now Professor Westergaard, allow to be artificial. It should, however, be observed, that the Pehleví and Zend alphabets differ chiefly in the first using no distinct characters to mark the short vowels. Of an edict said to have been issued by the last Sassanians to suppress Pehlevi as a language, we are unable to speak; but whatever of truth there may be in the story, it is evident that this supposed Pehleví was not the language to which Firdausi first gave that name, declaring it to be the language in which he had written the Sháh Náneh. Pársí and Pehleví (not the interlinear Pehleví of the Parsis) are, according to Firdausi, two names for one language; and his authority must supersede any modern attempt to establish a distinction between them. Spiegel, on the authority it is said of the Mínú Khird, puts Pázend¹ as a third name for the language of the Sháh Náneh. Quite inadmissible. Pázend is a commentary, as the name implies, *written below* the Zend text; and if we accept Firdausi's testimony, *Pársí* is not nearly but altogether identical with *Persian*; and so also, as has been shown, is his Pehleví. No definition contradicting Firdausi's,

¹ The word is modern; if not, let the use of it by Firdausi or his cotemporaries, or any old authority, be shown, or that it will be found in the Táríkh-i-Tabarí or its Persian version, made fifty years before the Sháh Náneh.

as to what was and is pure *Pehlevi*, can be accepted, unless supported by evidence as certain and authoritative as his words in the *Sháh Námech*. As to learned priests trying to make the writings of the *Zendavesta* intelligible under the Sassanians by *Pehlevi*,¹ later by *Pársi*, later in India by *Sanskrit*, and again later by *Gujarátí* translations: the notion is only adverted to, to mark entire dissent from any distinction being drawn, if intended, between what is called the *Pehlevi* of the Sassanians and the *Pársi* of Firdausi. No one would confound the *true Pehlevi* of the Sassanians, or the *Pehlevi* of that version of the "*Kalila wa Damna*," translated into Arabic by Abdullah Bin Al Mukaffa, who died A.H. 137 (A.D. 755), and the *Pehlevi* of the *Sháh Námech*, with the artificial jargon of the same name in the books of the *Pársis*.²

In conclusion — Referring to the authority of Burnouf, it is objected to the hypothesis of Zend being an artificial language constructed out of Sanskrit, that there are many forms in Zend where Zend is more primitive than Sanskrit, and these very forms here and there are found irregularities and archaisms in the Vedas. Accepting these as facts, it would then appear either that the Zend is an older language than Sanskrit, or that both proceeded from one common source. Sanskrit, a highly refined, rich, and powerful language, has been ancillary to a literature profound, extensive, and varied, dating further back than three thousand years. Zend, lying dead or dormant the while, has only reappeared in the books of the *Pársis*, where for literature we have writings of the very smallest worth, when not absolute nonsense. Therefore the admission of this relationship between the two languages would be proving too much; and hence we are at liberty to take the more probable side of the question, and not to be called upon to believe that the insufferable drivel of the *Vendidád* was written in the times of the *Rig-Veda*. The etymological feat of deriving *Bokini* from *Svasar*, the tremendous mistake and its life-destroying consequences of writing *Agneh* for *Agre*, and Spiegel's copious list of various readings, should warn us against too readily accepting as archaisms or primitive forms, readings which may be nothing better than the clerical errors of ignorant copyists.

¹ Zend could never be made intelligible by *Pehlevi*, because not one *dastúr* or mobed of ten who read and understand the Zend, can make anything of *Pehlevi*, from its wanting distinct letters to represent the short vowels.

² For specimens of this language, see *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. iv., pp. 362, 355, 356, 358, 361, and 362.